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ON THE PRESENT STATE OF IRELAND.

WE set out with a decided determination to avoid controversial Theology and party Politics. We have too great a veneration for the charity of the Gospel, to risk the violation of its spirit by becoming polemics ; and we are too sincerely attached to the British Constitution, to submit our necks to the yoke of a Party. But, whilst we shall endeavour to keep clear of systems and factions, we wish it to be distinctly understood, that we are by no means indifferent to those great political and religious principles, which are unquestionably of the highest importance, as affecting both the temporal and eternal interests of man. We hope, however, to prove ourselves friends to civil liberty, without absolutely joining the Whigs ; and to vindicate the necessity of salutary restraints upon licentiousness, without enlisting ourselves in the ranks of the Tories. In religion too, we hope to prove that we are Christians, and friendly to free inquiry, without asserting that every vain and illiterate pretender has a right to set up for a public instructor ; and that we respect existing establishments, without thinking them infallible, or denying the right of private judgment. In a particular manner, when the happiness and prosperity of our native land are concerned, we shall make no compromise with any Party : we shall fearlessly blame each or all, as reason may require. We are aware, that in the present state of Ireland, this is not likely to be a very popular course ; but our object is to correct and not to foster the prejudices of our countrymen ; to direct their energies and passions into better channels, and not to swell the current that has already in too many instances overflowed its banks.

“ Still pleased to praise, yet not afraid to blame,” we shall keep the even tenor of our way, trusting to obtain the approbation and support of the moderate and respectable part of the community.

The eyes of the whole civilized world are at this moment turned upon Ireland, with intense and painful interest. In the political and religious agitation that prevails from north to south, some imagine that they hear “ dreadful notes of preparation,” and anticipate alarming events. We do not participate in these fears : we do not believe that the public tranquillity will be disturbed, in any serious degree. A people so long accustomed to the “ wordy strife,” will not be readily provoked to go farther. Still, however, the philosopher, the

statesman, and the philanthropist must anxiously inquire, How does it happen, that one of the fairest and most fertile islands of the globe, with a population proverbially talented, spirited, generous, and kind, has so long been the most distracted and unfortunate portion of the earth?—To this question, every man has a ready answer, and likewise a panacea for the evil. The Catholic avers, that all the evil has arisen from the original oppression of an English faction; from the continued tyranny of a Protestant Ascendancy; from the reckless spirit and irritating displays of Orangism; and from withholding from the majority of the people, their natural and inalienable rights. Remove these evils, and then the reign of harmony and kind feeling will commence. “A modest request, truly!” says the High Church and State Politician or Divine. “What! surrender our undoubted privileges! Give up the sacred and inalienable property of the Church, which we hold both by Divine right and human laws! Put down the men who venerate the memory of the great author of the glorious revolution! Place the superstitious and priest-ridden Catholic by the side of the free and enlightened Protestant! This would be purchasing tranquillity at too high a price. No: instead of this, let the Catholic receive education at our hands; let him read his Bible; let him renounce the dominion of his priests; let him give up his absurd prejudices; and let him obtain his civil liberties, by abandoning a false religion—then, and not till then, may we expect security and repose.” “Both parties are wrong,” says the liberal reformer. “You have equally mistaken the cause and the cure of the disease. Maladministration has done all; my friends have been too long out of office; the king has too much patronage; the House of Commons is corrupt. Establish a liberal, unanimous, and honest administration; lessen the influence of the Crown; cut off the rotten Boroughs; reform the House of Commons, and then all will be well; then will the green Island smile in peace; its fair daughters mingling together as sisters, and its generous sons as brothers and as friends!”

However contradictory these views, and many others entertained by different parties, they at least unite in one point, the admission, that crying evils do exist in this unfortunate country, and that it would be a most desirable thing to see them removed. But to accomplish this latter, is the difficulty. That the disorder rages amongst us is admitted; that the whole frame of society is imbued with it, is evident from its unhealthy state; but who can point out the diseased members; who can effect a cure! As it often happens in the

abodes of insanity, that every inmate considers himself of sound mind, and only laments the infirmity of his neighbour, so in *our* religious and political world, every man looks upon himself and his party, as the only immaculate patriots. Could we only bring others to right views, that is, *our* views, what halcyon days would await our country! But then, *they* are just as unhappy concerning *our* errors, and as anxious to correct them; and when we do meet for these "labours of love" and mutual reformation, it does not always happen that we accomplish the good which we desire. *They* are generally bigoted, or influenced by selfish views, and *will* not be convinced; and what is worse, they often maliciously attribute to us the very same failings!

Such is the absurd vanity, and obstinate pertinacity of men. Every thing must yield to their self-will or their self-interest. And it uniformly happens that the virulence of the contending parties is just in proportion to their secret misgivings with regard to the purity and propriety of their own principles. The sincere and honest man is always moderate in his conduct, and charitable in his judgments, believing that those who differ from him, may be equally conscientious with himself; but the hypocrite in religion and the trader in politics, is always violent, knowing that he deserves to be suspected by others, and anxious to escape the reproaches of his own heart in the turmoil of a controversy, or the clamour of a faction. This is the very secret of the calamities of Ireland. Differing in religious tenets, and this difference affecting not only civil rights, but also the ordinary comforts and distinctions of life, the dominant party are willing to hold by all means what they have gained, without being very scrupulous regarding the right by which they possess it; and the suffering party are anxious to regain what they have lost, without considering whether they were ever really entitled to it. Were *numbers* on the side of *power*, no serious public evil would result from such a state of things; but where the proud crest of conscious strength raises itself in opposition to the sceptre of authority, concession or compromise, on either side, is scarcely to be expected. Independently of self-interest, the haughty possessor of honors and emoluments scorns to yield any thing to a menace or a demand; and those who think they have a claim of *right*, equally disdain to solicit a *boon*. Each party finds a justification of its pride in the arrogance of its opponent, and vindicates its own intemperance from the violence of the very resistance it has produced. Thus it is, that "action and re-action become equal," and that extremes perpetually generate each other. The unge-

nerous triumph and haughty bearing of the one party produce bitter resentments and counter associations on the other side; and the deplorable acts of these unhallowed fraternities afford but too good a plea for the continued hostility of their opponents.

From what has been said, it may be inferred, that we, in some degree, blame all parties; and we candidly avow that we do so, even at the risk of offending all. We have seldom known, even in trifling disputes between individuals, that some blame might not be attributable to each; and we are convinced, that, in the important differences which arise in communities, the same thing will invariably be found. Passion, prejudice, interest, and artful misrepresentations, may mislead the best understanding, and poison the purest heart. No dispassionate and honest man can deny, that the Catholics of these countries labour under heavy grievances; and their best friends must admit, that they have often been intemperate and indiscreet. That the ascendant party in Church and State possesses many honest men and true patriots, we sincerely believe; but that the *spirit* of the party is too *exclusive* for the state of society in this country, and that some of its acts have produced unhappy consequences, cannot be denied. The warmest opponents of Ministers must admit, that they have shown a sincere desire to tranquillize and conciliate; but their greatest admirers must deplore, that they have adopted narrow and ineffectual expedients, in place of striking at the root of the evil, by enlarged views, and liberal enactments.

The consequences have been precisely what were to be expected from human nature. All parties are discontented; and, instead of approximating, they have been thrown to a greater distance from each other. The records of history do not furnish a period, even in seasons of open convulsion, when the same general spirit of animosity prevailed, throughout this unhappy land. All the best feelings of nature, and all the ordinary circumstances of life, that usually bind man to man, in brotherhood and affection, in this ill-fated land, produce only discord and disunion. How delightful are the associations usually connected with the sacred name of country! When the wanderer hears it pronounced even in a distant land, his heart gushes out with the tenderest emotions. Friendship, love, patriotism, and all the charities and endearments of social life, rise up to his view. The acquaintance of a moment, if discovered to be a countryman, is instantly embraced with the cordiality of ancient affection and esteem. No theme engages their attention, but country; no

converse, but that of sacred home! To a large portion of wretched Irishmen, however, the name of country is associated only with sufferings and degradation; and that of countryman, with political enemy, or religious antagonist. In the secret meetings and machinations of party associations, the worst passions of the human breast are inflamed into madness; and the first opportunity that occurs, they burst forth in disgraceful and sanguinary feuds; where hands, which should only be clasped in amity, are crimsoned with a brother's blood. When the laws of the land—which are framed in wisdom, which are admirably adapted to secure individual rights and social happiness, and which, we sincerely believe, are administered, in all the higher departments, with as much purity and impartiality as human nature can attain—attempt to quell these angry passions, by punishing the perpetrators of crimes, it is distressing to think, how frequently their salutary efforts are thwarted, by conflicting testimonies, and awful perjuries. In the presence of their fellow-men, many of whom are acquainted with the facts—in the presence of an incorruptible Judge, whose only aim is justice, and the happiness of his country—in the awful presence of the Great Searcher of hearts—innumerable wretches are to be found, who, in order to criminate an innocent opponent, or screen a guilty partisan, dare to raise the volume of truth to their polluted lips, and call upon the name of the God of truth to sanction a deliberate, and often a malicious falsehood!

Persons unacquainted with the social state of Ireland, and strangers to the diabolical influence of party spirit, may be disposed to think that we have gone too far, in the statement just made. But were they to attend our Assize Circuits; were they to trace the progress of the hundreds of trials for party assaults and murders, that regularly occur; were they to see the hosts of witnesses who are brought up in array, and who, with steady hands and unmoved countenances, fearlessly swear in direct contradiction to each other; were they to see the Jury casting distressful looks upon one another, as if lamenting over fallen humanity, and deploring their inability to do justice; were they to see the Judge, now reddening with indignation, and now turning pale with horror, at the accumulation of perjuries and frauds; were they to witness these scenes, they would be convinced that the pen of man could not over-rate the social degradation and crime, that prevail among the lower classes, of the various party associations in Ireland. Deplorable as it is, that, in support of a party or a name, men should violate the laws, under the

idle pretence of desiring to maintain or reform the constitution; awful as it is, that, on such grounds, the hands of countrymen and Christians should be imbrued in each other's blood; we really look upon the shocking perjuries committed, the utter breaking down of the very barriers of human justice, and the audacious defiance of the Divine indignation, as fraught with more extended and more lasting calamity. Wise and conciliatory laws may abate the virulence of party, and restrain the arm of violence; but what laws, or what exertions, will be able to restore the moral spring in the human breast, that has been once broken by perjury! What power shall compel him that has "taken the name of God in vain," in a question of party, to speak the truth in a question of property or life! Many sincere patriots and Christians have entertained serious doubts, whether the frequent administration of oaths in this country, is not of itself calculated, even when the occasion is lawful, and the testimony true, to lessen the sacred reverence with which they ought to be viewed. But can there be any doubt, that the sanctity and obligation of public testimony must be awfully impaired, in a country where thousands and tens of thousands are banded together by oaths, in direct opposition to the laws of the land, and the charities of the Gospel; where faithfulness to a party is preferred to fidelity to God; and where the miscreant perjurer receives the applause of his confederates, for defeating the ends of justice? The independence of our Judges, and the inestimable privilege of Trial by Jury, must vainly attempt to defend either personal or civil rights, unless there be, in the whole mass of the community, a deeply rooted veneration for the sanctity of public testimony. Though we have not seen this subject taken up by any writer on the affairs of Ireland, we are fully convinced, that no circumstance connected with this country more imperatively demands the serious consideration of the enlightened Statesman and sincere Christian. We do not participate in a very common opinion, that in party questions, even the Jury-Box is not free from taint. Making a reasonable allowance for the ordinary and unavoidable influence of education and connexions, we are firmly persuaded, that our Juries are generally selected from men of such integrity and moral respectability, as to preserve, so far as they are concerned, the administration of justice from deserved reproach. May they always continue to be such! For, should the time ever arrive, when the sacred streams, through which judgment flows to the community, shall be polluted by party feelings, this land will indeed be "a waste and howling wilderness."

But do we not live in a land, denominated, by way of eminence, "the land of saints!" Can we not pour the sacred oil of Christian charity upon the angry waves of human passions? Alas! for our poor country! like the noxious reptile that extracts only poison from the fairest and the sweetest flowers, her misguided children make the very Gospel of Peace the fountain of contention. That blessed Gospel, which was ushered into the world by the joyful strains of the Heavenly Hosts, proclaiming "peace on earth and goodwill towards men," has too often, by an impious and melancholy perversion of its precepts, been made a plea for the most rancorous hatreds, the most relentless and bloody persecutions, that ever disgraced humanity: and at this very moment, the entire population of our country is agitated by the controversies and contentions of sects. Instead of meeting together, as brethren, upon the ground of their common humanity, their weakness, and their fallibility; instead of associating in kindness, as inhabitants of the same country, and members of the same civil community; instead of uniting in affection as the offspring of one Gracious Parent, as the disciples of one Master, as looking forward to that awful day when all the mists of earthly passions and prejudices shall be dispelled; they, by their strifes, make Faith to be suspected as only a profession, Hope as a delusion, and Charity as a dream of the enthusiast. Over that sacred Book which commands us "to love even our enemies," the combatants, encouraged by hosts of partisans, frown defiance, and hurl at each other charges of hypocrisy, worldly-mindedness, and idolatry!" Accusation produces retort; retort, anger; and anger, violence; till assemblies of men, professing to be the followers of the same Master, break up in the most disgraceful uproar and confusion. The public journals instantly send forth the details of the conflict, too often tinged with their own prejudices; and thus does the mass of the community become imbued with the baneful spirit of controversy. The great drama is often represented in miniature even at the social board; and men that have lived in cordiality for years, cast upon each other unkind looks and unmerited reflections. The soil, indeed, is at present peculiarly prepared to receive the seed of controversy so abundantly cast into it; and there is little doubt, but that like the teeth of the serpent sown by Cadmus, it will spring up in a harvest of armed polemics. For several years, the many inferior sects have been ardently contending for influence, not merely with the allowable weapons of zeal, but sometimes with those of misrepresentation and intrigue.

Religion is thus injured by the dissensions of her votaries. Infidelity rejoices whilst she sees her enemies immolating each other ; and in the disunion of all, finds a plausible pretext for scorning all.

Thus all the powerful bonds of country, of laws, and of religion, that usually connect mankind in amity, produce, in this ill-fated land, only mutual repulsion and hatred. The very bounties of Nature are converted into sources of discord. To one party, the fair and innocent flower seems only to blossom in scorn ; and to another, the soft green mountain raises its head but as the champion of rebellion ! Music itself produces here the most unnatural effects. The simple harmony of sweet sounds excites on one side the most ridiculous exultation, and on the other the most absurd and frantic rage. So far from "soothing the breast," it frequently awakens the most savage passions. The very buds of human society are blighted and tainted by the pestilential breath of party. Even children learn to lisp in accents of mutual insult, and to array themselves in colours of offence. The eye of age for a moment loses its dulness, and the voice of age its weakness, in beholding the procession of a party, or enjoining the perpetuation of a feud ! Nay, even the grave, "where the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest," is not always sacred, and secure from political and religious influence. As if the very bones were imbued with hostility, as if the heart could burn with enmity when it has ceased to beat, there are many who seem desirous to perpetuate division, even in death.

Out of this moral chaos, it would seem scarcely possible, that any thing but the forming hand of the Creator could produce order, harmony, and stability. Yet we firmly believe, that HE will eventually bring forth good from the enormous mass of suffering and evil, with which our poor country is at present oppressed. The Almighty, however, has given us active and moral powers, which, under his Providence, we must exercise, to promote our own good ; and, in the great work of national regeneration, the humblest individuals may be used as instruments. We are told by naturalists, that the hour of deepest darkness immediately precedes the dawn ; and we sincerely hope, that the awful gloom which at this moment overspreads our country, is but the forerunner of bright and happy days. We observed already that the extremes of religious and political party beget each other. They do more. By their very intemperance and folly, they are gradually producing a *middle* party, that will eventually become too powerful for both. During

the agitations produced by the rebellion of 1798, many excellent men leagued themselves together, we are persuaded, with the sincere and honest purpose of promoting personal and national security; and great numbers subsequently joined them, with a view to obliterate suspicions of disaffection, which attached to their own characters. But these times have passed away; and no wise man is now afraid, that he shall be considered a traitor to his king, because he loves his country; nor an enemy to his country, because he is attached to his prince. The moderate, the thinking, and the truly religious portion of the community, look upon the two great sentiments of loyalty and patriotism as perfectly in unison; and they form a growing middle party, that must obtain the ascendancy over the other two. This is the party, that is flowing on, like a strong counter current, increasing in depth and extension, and gradually attracting all around it, till nothing shall be left beyond its influence, but the very froth and scum of faction.

We do not speak of these things from conjecture, but as actual spectators. We rejoice to see, that, by its very violence, the hydra of party is exhausting its energies, and gradually detaching from it all the substantial influence, sound sense, and good feeling of the North; whilst we hail the star of Christian charity, that has lately arisen in the West.* We shall, therefore, mildly, yet firmly, use our best endeavours to thin the ranks of bigotry and intolerance on all sides, and to swell those of moderation and charity. Being of no party, we are enemies to none; and therefore we feel that, however incompetent in other respects, we are at least qualified by kindness of feeling, to offer an humble advice to all.

That affairs cannot and ought not to continue in their present state, is admitted on all sides; but how to amend them, so as to promote the general good, without trenching upon existing interests and individual rights, is the difficulty.—Some imagine that all this may be easily accomplished, by wise and liberal legislation. We are not of this opinion. Legislation is not omnipotent; it may do much, but it cannot do all. As there are diseases of the human constitution which baffle the skill of the ablest physician, so there may be disorders of the body-politic, for which the soundest heads and the best hearts cannot discover a remedy. As in medicine too, no cure can be expected if the patient do not submit to the prescription, so in legislation, the wisest enactments can

* We allude to the "Christian Protestant Society," instituted in Limerick, under the auspices of the Primate of all Ireland, and the excellent Bishop of Limerick; and which has for its prime object, the detaching of Ministers of the Gospel from political factions, and the general promotion of Christian charity.

effect nothing, if systematically evaded or resisted. A stubborn patient may die under the best advice; and a divided and headstrong people may make each other miserable, under the best Government. We by no means insinuate, however, that our legislators may not do much to promote the peace of this land; or, that important changes in the laws themselves, and also in the administration of them, may not be required. We are satisfied, that, from the exalted head of the Government, through almost all its subordinate members, a wise, liberal, and kind feeling towards Ireland prevails. We are convinced, that the legislature is both able and willing to do its part; and that, at no distant day, it will do so. We shall now endeavour to prevail upon our countrymen to do their parts, that the efficacy of the laws may be impartially tried; and that, in the innumerable cases to which no human enactments can extend, they may be guided by "the pure and perfect law of God."

In the ordinary intercourse of the world, every man that desires to live in terms of amity with his neighbours, must yield many minor points of his own interest and inclination, to the general feeling and good of the community. So it is precisely on the larger scale of a nation. No one party, either political or religious, has any right to have its privileges and interests consulted, to the general disadvantage. Such a state of things would be essentially unwise and unjust; because it would necessarily produce animosity and resistance, and because the most important end of Government is to promote the general good. Tranquillity, therefore, and kind feeling, can never be brought about in this country, except by *mutual concession*. It would be too much to expect from human nature, that power and privilege should surrender *all* their influence; or suffering and calamity should cease to complain. Yet there must be something given up, on both sides. Authority must relax its grasp, and resistance lower its haughty crest. They must meet together upon the grand principle of "doing unto others, as they would wish others to do unto them." It is in vain to hope for peace to this distracted country, upon any other terms. Power may enact restrictive laws; it may inflict penalties that sever the tenderest ties of nature; it may even "make a desert and call it peace:" but by such means, it would only increase a hundred fold the evil it desires to remove, by rousing the honest sympathies of nature into deadly opposition. All such experiments have failed, and must fail; being in direct opposition to the common laws of nature.

We firmly believe that the enlightened and liberal mind,

which at present sway the councils of the nation, are incapable of desiring to rule in fear, where they might better reign in love. In whatever way it may be prudent to fence the question, so as to sooth the prejudices of some, and allay the conscientious fears of others, we are persuaded the time is not far distant, when our Catholic countrymen shall no longer suffer in their undoubted civil rights, for a faithful adherence to their religious principles. Persecution of any kind for the free exercise of private judgment, is at variance, both with the true spirit of Protestantism, and of the British Constitution. How foolish soever, or even criminal, the suffering party may sometimes have been, this affords no plea for the withholding of justice.—Concession, conciliation, and kindness, would also be peculiarly becoming in the present Government. What in a weak administration might be attributed to cowardice, would, in them, be ascribed only to magnanimity. We therefore sincerely hope, that our present “patriot King” will have the immortal honour, of finally removing those galling chains from a large portion of our countrymen, from which so many and heavy links were struck off in the reign of his predecessor. Such a work would be worthy of such a hand ; and would do more to tranquillize Ireland, than all the penal statutes which could be invented by the ingenuity, or executed by the tyranny of man.

In the meantime, much might be done, by the various influential classes of the community, to allay the existing irritation, both political and religious ; which would be a great good in itself, and highly important as preparing the way for just and liberal enactments. To some of these classes, we would address a few words in the spirit of candour and kindness ; and in the first place, to the

CLERGY OF ALL DENOMINATIONS.

As Ministers of the Gospel, several circumstances concur to render you the most powerful instruments of social tranquillity and happiness. The sacred and gracious nature of your office attaches a degree of dignity and venerableness to your character, that predisposes the community to listen to you with attention and respect. You are, besides, diffused throughout the whole mass of society ; mingling in the most interesting scenes of life, with every rank, and every party. When the wife is preserved to the affections of her husband, the mother to her child, and the friend to her anxious kindred, you preside in the happy circle, where, by a holy rite, the young Christian is dedicated to its Creator ; and as Na-

ture runs her course, you imprint on the youthful mind the earliest sentiments of piety and virtue. When heart is united to heart, it is your pleasing duty to join hand with hand, and to "rejoice with those that do rejoice." In the ever-changing occurrences of life, you have it constantly in your power to be the friend of the poor, to direct the bounties of the affluent, to pour balm into the wounded spirit, to reclaim the heedless wanderer, and to obtain the blessing promised to the maker of peace. At the Holy Altar, when every inordinate desire is quelled, when all within is gratitude to Heaven and love to man, you distribute the emblems of mercy, and are associated with the gift of redemption. And when the last sad hour is come, that severs the bonds of nature and affection, it is yours to place the staff of Christian hope in the hand of the departing pilgrim, and to bind up the broken hearts that are bursting around you. Even when "dust returns to dust," you stand at the dark entrance of the "narrow house," to proclaim in the name of the Redeemer, that the sting has been taken from death, and victory snatched from the grave.

Interwoven thus with all the most interesting and important events of life, from the cradle to the grave; associated in the minds and affections of the people with the dearest concerns of time and of eternity; you seem, above all earthly beings, peculiarly destined to be the comforters and friends of your species. Were you to exercise your influence with prudence and zeal; were you constantly to impress upon the minds of your people, the special commandment of Christ to "love one another;" were you to teach them that salvation is not limited to a party or a sect; and that contention and strife and uncharitableness are at utter variance with the whole tenor and spirit of the Gospel; and were you to prove yourselves sincere, by uniformly exercising *towards each other*, candid judgments, kind language, and courteous demeanour; you would confer immortal honor upon yourselves, and incalculable benefits upon your country. But if, instead of thus doing your duty, you become idle disputants and angry polemics; if you cast out bitter taunts, and openly accuse each other, not merely of error, but of deliberate corruption; if you become the abettors and instruments of parties which you ought to discountenance; if you prefer the extension of your sect, to the charities of the Gospel, you will be messengers of discord, and not angels of peace. The meek, pious, and faithful minister of the Gospel, whether clad in the lawn sleeves of the Prelate, or in the humble garb of a curate or dissenter, is an object of high veneration and esteem. But if there be any creature upon earth more despicable than ano-

ther, it is the political Divine, who prostitutes and shames his noble office, by joining the ranks of a party, whilst he ought to be the friend of man. From your education, studies, and experience, you know that it is impossible for all men to agree, in every point of faith and opinion. If you be really honest in your own views, why not admit that others may be equally sincere in theirs: and as you live in friendship with many who differ from you in the ordinary affairs of life, why not exercise the same forbearance in matters of religion? You can never *force* men to believe as you do; and why disturb the peace of society, because you cannot accomplish impossibilities? If you hold your own opinions honestly, avow them boldly: but give the same liberty to others; and still “keep the faith in the unity of the spirit.” Supported by the liberality of the people; mingling in all their scenes of joy and sorrow; possessing from the sacredness of your office, their entire confidence and esteem; how can you sow the seeds of discord, when you ought to be watering the olive of peace; or inflame, either for party or interest, the worst and most violent passions of the human heart, when it is your bounden duty to cherish the gentlest and the best! We speak thus unreservedly to the Clergy of all denominations, because it is a lamentable fact, that either through error or mistaken zeal, too many of them have been any thing but the ministers of peace; and because we believe that were it not for them, the laity would not so often disturb themselves with unprofitable controversies, connected both with religion and politics, that can have no result, but that of leading men to trample upon the charities of the Gospel.

We would especially entreat the attention of the ministers of the Established Church, who must feel that they are placed in a situation of extreme delicacy and difficulty. Situated as you are, in the midst of a population, the vast majority of whom have no sympathy, either with your opinions or institutions, and who are, nevertheless, obliged to support in pomp and affluence, by the sweat of their brow, men whose spiritual instructions they cannot conscientiously receive, whilst their own teachers are living in penury; you cannot expect it of human nature, that they should do otherwise, than view all your proceedings with suspicion, and even prejudice.—Add to this, that they are not merely obliged to pay for services by which they do not profit, but that most of them are deprived of their civil rights, because they will not sacrifice their religious principles; and you will not be surprised at their feelings. Nay, you will readily see, that of all the Clergy, you most require “wary walking,” to render

you, as we trust you wish to be, the instruments of public tranquillity. By extreme moderation in your demands; by refraining from all public attacks upon the opinions, or, as you may think them, prejudices, of the many; by the uniform exercise of that courteous, gentle demeanour, which suits the Ministers of peace; by freely distributing, as private gentlemen, a portion of what you derive from the labours of the people, in acts of secret munificence, or public utility; you may soothe prejudices, awaken respectful feelings, do much good to the community, and increase the stability of your Church. But, if you rigorously exact "the uttermost farthing;" if you insult the religious faith of the people; if you connect yourselves with political associations, to assist in withholding their civil rights; if you wear the badges of faction, as some have done to their shame, over the robes of peace; or if you manifest no sympathy with their private misfortunes, or their public wants; you must necessarily become objects of aversion, and be equally injurious to religious harmony and social order. Attached to Protestantism, on conviction and principle, we should rejoice to see you all joining in the holy league of Christian charity, with your distinguished brethren of Limerick; by which you would at once promote the interests of your Church, and advance the sacred cause of humanity!

In connexion with our candid and cordial address to the Clergy, we would say a few words to the friends of

BIBLE AND EDUCATION SOCIETIES.

We most heartily unite with you, in endeavouring to disseminate religious knowledge, and to place the volume of truth in every hand. We do not join in the cry sometimes raised against your motives, or attribute your zeal solely to a desire to promote secular and private interests. We believe that you are conscientious and sincere; but we are most desirous, that your zeal should, in every instance, be regulated by wisdom, and a sound knowledge of human nature. To promote your own success, we would beg leave to remind you, that, while your Societies have some great object *in common*, each has also some *peculiar* to itself, which may be promoted by separate plans, and may be injured by too great an anxiety to blend them.

The object of Bible Societies is simply, to give all classes an opportunity of having copies of the Scriptures, in the common version, without note or comment; and of this, we

most cordially approve. In promoting this object, however, you may meet with difficulties, which may surprise and disappoint you; and which may rouse an ardour on your part, that may carry you too far. From the essential differences between your views of the Scriptures, and those of the Catholics, they may be expected to differ from you about the mode of circulating them; and, while we adopt your views, we think their objections are entitled to respect. Considering the peculiar sentiments entertained by the Catholic Clergy, we believe they may be conscientious in desiring to see the Scriptures put into the hands of their people, only with such additions as they think are calculated to guard them against error. Many of the wisest Protestants have thought it proper, without trenching on the right of private judgment, to endeavour to guide the understandings of the people, by various explanations; and, considering the importance which Catholics attach to their own explanations, it is not wonderful that they should be proportionably desirous to have these connected with the Scriptures. On this point, it is fair to reason with them, calmly and dispassionately: but we deprecate every thing like insult, or even severity; still more, the imputing of views to them which they may not entertain. They should be allowed to state their own views, without exaggeration or reproach on the part of others; and every opportunity should be taken to conciliate and co-operate with those who declare themselves friendly to the circulation of the Scriptures.

The various Education Societies, in which you also take an interest, have other objects in view, which might be kept separate from the circulation of the Scriptures, while at the same time they would harmonise with it; and we would urge you to consider, whether, by keeping them in some instances distinct, you may not succeed better in gaining them all. Where it is practicable, we would rejoice to see the reading of the Scriptures made a part of education; but where it is impracticable, we would regret exceedingly, if the plans of education were relinquished or impeded. If the use of the Scriptures, as a school-book, prevents multitudes from receiving the elements of general education, would it not be better simply to teach them to read, and adopt *other* methods for furnishing them with copies of the Scriptures? Were the poor taught to read by one Society, and furnished with copies of the Scriptures for their own use by another, much good might still be done, and a connexion be preserved between education and religion, to which it would be difficult to raise objections.

We should hope, however, that such a separation of objects is not necessary; and great care should be taken to prevent it. Every attempt should be made to bring the poor of all denominations to receive the elements of education, and even of religious knowledge, *together*. Such an arrangement produces the happiest effects in seminaries for the higher ranks, and would be still more beneficial in those for the lower. Were the children of different denominations to mingle thus, at the warm and generous season of life, mutual intercourse would gradually rub off mutual asperities; the various parties would find less difference among one another than they expected; and a union of affection would lead to an extension of light, while mutual feelings of kindness would shoot up in the heart, along with the seeds of knowledge. To accomplish this, might not different parties meet in amity, on the broad and universally recognised principles of Christianity; and, leaving out of view the minor points that mark the boundaries of sects, endeavour to form a system of moral and religious education, that would prepare the rising generation for being good members of civil society, and of any part of the Church with which they may afterwards be connected?

We are persuaded that many, of all connexions, are willing to make concessions, and even sacrifices, for gaining such objects.—If difficulties arise from different versions of the Scriptures, we know that many would concur in permitting both the Protestant and Catholic versions to be used in the same schools; and we would strongly urge the extension of this equitable practice.—If there be objections to the use of the whole Bible as a school-book, we know that many zealous Protestants are willing to make concessions on this point, which we would recommend to general consideration. While they would urge the necessity of every person perusing for himself the whole Bible, to see what God has revealed, they think also that some parts might be omitted with propriety in a course of *public* reading, and that the attention of the young might be directed to some portions of it more than to others.—Nay they would concur in a proposal that has sometimes been suggested, of forming *selections* for the use of schools—and perhaps for the use of the young generally; never losing sight, however, of the necessity of giving them opportunities afterwards of perusing the whole Scriptures.—We would take an opportunity of giving publicity to such a proposal, as most worthy of consideration, and as what would be embraced by many of different connexions.

We should hope that none would urge the adoption of any measures that are not necessary for the purposes of imparti-

lity ; but if other arrangements be found indispensable, we would recommend the serious consideration of them, rather than forego the advantages of a general system of education for all classes. We lament and deprecate the separation of the lower orders in receiving the elements of education, as it may sow the seeds of dissention in youth, which may bring forth the bitterest fruits in mature years.—These evils we are sure the best friends of education are anxious to prevent ; and we believe they may do much to prevent them, by prudence, conciliation, and kindness.

Next to the Clergy and friends of religion, we would address a few words to the

LANDED PROPRIETORS AND MAGISTRACY.

Not merely from your education, but from the influence of wealth and station, you are most important members of the community ; the natural guardians and friends, indeed, of the humbler and poorer classes ; and on your estates, like the heads of numerous families, who look up to you with respect. In return for the sweat of their brows and the labour of their hands, by which you live in ease and affluence, you unquestionably owe them protection and good will. And there is no people on earth more sensible of kindness than the Irish. In the midst of privations and sufferings, a sympathising look, or a gentle word, opens the fountains of their generous hearts, which instantly overflow with gratitude. Treat them, therefore, as fellow-men ; reside amongst them as friends ; afford them, as far as you can, useful employment, and let them share in the comforts of their own industry ; keep aloof too from all parties that would insult their religion, or trample upon their civil rights : and you will secure an ascendancy in their hearts, that will not only bind them in fidelity to you and your families, but also unite them in affection with one another. The independent country gentleman, speculating on no advancement, and countenancing no faction ; but living in the midst of his tenantry, compassionate to their misfortunes, considerate of their rights, and the composer of their occasional disagreements ; is unquestionably one of the most happy, respectable, and useful members of society. Were this country blessed with many such, (and we rejoice to say, that it is blessed with some,) all the perversions of religion, and all the machinations of party, would not be able essentially to disturb its peace. But, when the great absentee proprietor, or the resident

“petty tyrant of a field,” leaves to the poor peasant nothing but the remembrance of his toils, the wreck of his hopes, and the certainty of his miseries; or when assaulted by the violence of a faction, he appeals to the laws of his country, and finds upon the seat of Justice, instead of the natural guardian of his rights, only the leagued and sworn friend of his antagonist; is it in human nature, that his heart should not be wrung with anguish, and that his untutored mind should not brood over plans of retaliation and revenge? No country can be peaceful, no society secure, where the seat of Justice is not like Cæsar’s wife, “not pure only, but also above suspicion!” And will the poor Catholic be satisfied that it is thus pure, when the very Magistrate, that perhaps a few days ago paraded in the ranks of a faction with his enemy, sits upon the Bench of Justice, to investigate his wrongs? Tho’ the heart should be as untainted as the mountain snow, and the justice of the sentence as clear as the light of heaven, one party at least will be dissatisfied, and snatch perhaps with his own arm, that of which he considers himself deprived by a perversion of the laws. We record it as our deliberate conviction, founded equally upon experience and the common principles of human nature, that Justice will never be respected in this land, nor will her awards be productive of peace, whilst the leagued partisans of *any* political faction are permitted to enter the Jury-box, or to sit upon the Bench.

We shall now, in the spirit of moderation, address a few words to the

OPPOSERS OF THE CATHOLIC CLAIMS.

There may be amongst you, as amongst all other classes, some who are actuated more by a regard to present interests and prejudices, than to public rights and rational principles; and some who are utterly ignorant of the plainest circumstances that distinguish one sect or party from another. To such we speak not; for the labour would be hopeless and unprofitable. We address ourselves only to the enlightened and conscientious among you: and we freely admit that there are many such; with some of whom we live on terms of intimacy and affection, though differing in several views, both political and religious. Some of you allege, that the Catholics do not labour under any serious grievances; that the great mass are indifferent with regard to emancipation; and that even if they obtained all they demand, it would be of no essential benefit to their body. To this we reply.—The

chains which they wear may be light, but still they are visible, and may be pointed at ; and you know that there is a native spirit of independence and honest pride in the breast of man, that will not tamely submit either to bondage or to contempt. If it be true that the great mass are indifferent to their own rights, (which is at least problematical), that very fact would be a most powerful argument for their disenthralment. If centuries of oppression have so completely obliterated the nobler traces of humanity, that millions are content to be a degraded caste in their native land, it is absolutely necessary for their own sake, and for the honour and prosperity of the country, to rouse them from their indifference. No nation can be safe from foreign force or internal treachery, in which the great mass of the people do not both know and enjoy their rights, so as to be willing to defend them.—With regard to the other objection, that emancipation would be of little value to the Catholics themselves, were we even to admit its truth, we would deny its force. It proves, in fact, the very opposite of what you intend : for, if it be, in reality, a matter of no consequence for them to *receive* their rights, it can be of no advantage to you, to *withhold* them. If they be only, like children, clamouring for a useless bauble, why not indulge them at once ; why make it a matter of importance by refusing it ?—But many of you aver, that even if they were put into full possession of all their own rights, they would not be contented unless they seized upon yours also. On the same principle, it might be said that were any of you legally repossessed of an estate, of which he had been long and unjustly deprived, he would never rest satisfied until he added to his own, the property of his neighbour, to which he had no right. But the objection is too absurd to require refutation.—Almost equally futile is another, founded upon apprehended danger to the Protestant Establishment, and the British Constitution. So far from anticipating danger to the principles of the Reformation, from the removal of Catholic disabilities, we seriously declare, that were we to devise a plan of conversion, the first principle of it would be Catholic Emancipation ; by which we would at once remove all jealousies respecting our own motives, and do away the natural pertinacity and honorable pride with which men adhere to a persecuted faith. We revere the principles of the Revolution, because they were favourable to civil and religious liberty ; and we venerate the British Constitution, because it is the guardian of these principles, and can never require support from the perpetuation of injustice. It is too strong in its own integrity to require the aid, or dread the opposition, of any faction or

party; and it will become doubly strong, when all shall be admitted to its privileges, and interested in maintaining its laws.—But leaving the ground of abstract reasoning, we appeal to your hearts, as men and as Christians, and ask, would you, under a change of situations, desire your Catholic countrymen to behave towards you, as you are disposed to act towards them? Would you wish them to deprive you of your civil rights, for a conscientious adherence to your religious principles? Would you desire them to snatch from your hands, the fair fruits of your industry and talents? Would you wish them to shut against you and your children, the principal avenues of honorable ambition?—We leave the matter to your own breasts.

We next offer our tribute of sincere commiseration and cordial advice,

TO OUR COUNTRYMEN OF THE CATHOLIC FAITH.

Brooding over centuries of privations; the misfortunes of your ancestors, periodically recalled by irritating triumphs, your natural rights so long withheld; your fondest hopes so often blasted; your very religion reviled; our wonder is, not that many of you are ignorant or violent, nor that several of you have been guilty of outrages, but that there is amongst you so much knowledge, moderation, and respect for the laws. The very consciousness of your wrongs, and feeling of your degradation, expose you to great evil from two opposite causes—the sympathy of your fellow-sufferers, and the insults of your enemies. Hence, the deplorable intemperance and preposterous measures of your public assemblies, that have startled your warmest advocates, and made them almost doubt the sincerity of your most zealous leaders. Nay, so absurd and unfortunate have been most of the proceedings of the Catholic Association, in the eyes of your judicious and moderate friends, that Mr. O'Connell, and many other of its leading members, are believed to have a secret desire to retard your emancipation. We do not, indeed, participate in this opinion. We can readily conceive, that, galled by the attacks of their adversaries, and cheered by the enthusiastic acclamations of their friends, even the most upright men may be so hurried on by their passions, as to commit acts destructive of the very cause which they desire to promote. This we believe to be the case with your leaders; but, whatever may be their motives, we are convinced that their orations and plans have been more injurious to your interests, than

all the opposition of your enemies. Had the Association confined itself to the simple question of emancipation, and had it even collected a *Rente* to enable the poor of your communion to appeal to the laws, its objects would have been legitimate, and its exertions would have been cheered by the countenance of every unprejudiced patriot. But, instead of pursuing this rational and moderate course, it has entangled itself in all the mazes of law, and politics, and religion. Nothing has been too low for its cognizance; nothing too high for its ambition. Private individuals, public characters, and even whole communities, have been wantonly and unjustly assailed; whilst the money collected from the cottage of the starving peasant, has been voted away for the most preposterous purposes. We tell you in kindness, that these things "have cooled your friends, and heated your enemies."

Mr. O'Connell has become the best auxiliary of Sir Harcourt Lees. The moderate and thinking part of your friends, on whom you must ultimately depend for the success of your reasonable claims, have been startled by your conduct and your pretensions. Your steadiest advocates in the North, the great Body of the Presbyterians, amongst whose Ministers, we are convinced, there is not one Orangeman, and who at one of their Synods, (composed of laity and clergy,) in 1814, passed a *unanimous Declaration* in favour of your claims, have been so often and so falsely abused in your Association, that they must be possessed of more than the ordinary virtues of humanity, if many of them have not relaxed in their zeal for your cause. We know that the whole of your Body ought not to be condemned for the folly of your leaders, and that the question of emancipation should be considered as one of abstract right: but men are not all philosophers, without feelings, and without passions. We tell you, therefore, again, what you will not learn from flattering and inflaming one another, that most of the proceedings of your Association have distressed your friends, given a triumph to your enemies, and tended, in our mind, to retard the restoration of your privileges. With the exception of persons belonging to your own communion, there is probably not one man out of *ten*, who a few years ago signed Memorials to Parliament in your behalf, that would this day, cheerfully and without hesitation, do the same act. And, independently of what you have lost amongst the people, your conduct must have thrown your advocates in the Ministry and in Parliament, into the most awkward situation. Your leaders have so constantly magnified your numbers, and talked of your physical strength, that

we do not see how any man, *just now*, could ask a concession. No Government ought to be bearded by a party, nor yield to a menace, either direct or implied. The granting even of an undoubted right, to a threatening demand, would argue an unworthy timidity; and leave it to be supposed that a concession had been made to *fear*, which should only spring from a regard to *justice*. We entreat you, therefore, for your own sakes and for that of your country, to return to the paths of moderation and discretion: and we are convinced that nothing can long retard the restoration of your privileges, except your own violence and folly.

In winding up this long and desultory article, we would say a very few words to the

CONDUCTORS OF THE PUBLIC PRESS.

You have the management of an engine, of infinitely greater power than either the tongue or the sword: but, in proportion to its influence, is its capacity to do the most extensive good or evil. By the exercise of a sound discretion, by inculcating the sacred charity of the Gospel, you may scatter over the land the seeds of harmony and security, and confer inestimable benefits upon your country. But if, instead of reforming the public taste, instructing the public mind, and guiding the public feeling, you become degraded into the tools of a party, or the organs of a sect, you must be the instruments of incalculable evil. We regret to say, that too many of the public journals partake of this latter character. Commenced under the auspices of a faction or a sect, they prolong a miserable and pernicious existence, by pandering to the worst passions of the human breast. And so completely has the taste of the community become vitiated by this system, that it cannot enjoy the plain and substantial fare of truth and moderation; but requires to be stimulated by the piquancy of public misrepresentations, or the still more grateful relish of personal hostilities and slanders. The private hatreds of the various writers are too often wreaked upon the parties to which their opponents belong; and no weapon is considered unlawful, that can vigorously defend a cause, or wound an adversary. This is a lamentable state of affairs; and, we confess, we are almost hopeless of a change. Passion and prejudice must have their food. They are willing to pay for it; and too many will think it their interest to supply them with whatever they relish most. But, although we cannot expect ever to see the time, when all the conductors

of the public press shall “let the ends they aim at, be their country’s, their God’s, and truth’s,” we still trust that, even in this respect, some amelioration may take place, from the growth of a kinder and better feeling, amongst the influential classes of the community. If the *unpalatable truth* which we have addressed to some of these classes, should in any degree contribute to so desirable a result, it will give us infinite pleasure; but should we fail to accomplish our object, we shall at least enjoy the consciousness of having impartially and kindly endeavoured to discharge our duty.

Z.

QUICQUID IN BUCCAM VENIT,

WHATEVER COMES UPPERMOST.

BY THE YOUNGER PERSEUS.

No. I.

HOLD! Mr. Editor. What! dare you say
 I am no satirist? How know you that?
 Know, I of satire long have worn the bay,
 And with the favours of the Muse am fat.
 I *am* no satirist; but ’tis no matter;—
 I’ve but to speak the truth—and that is satire.

I have an honest Muse; a stubborn thing,
 That, like the Theban, lies not even in jest:
 She bids me to her simple altar bring
 The truth unmasked; for that she loves the best;—
 Truth, seldom seen on earth—a heavenly treasure:
 This she commands, on pain of her displeasure.

Though all should varnish, varnish will not I:
 I cannot follow multitudes to sin.
 All lies I hate, and flattery is a lie;
 I will not flatter man, a world to win.
 Kings and their ministers must take their chance:
 I flatter kings! no; not the king of France.